ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A method use on a computer having a graphical operating environment is provided for displaying the content items of a container. The method includes enumerating the items that exist within the container or folder and determining whether a graphical preview can be generated for the item. If so, the item is added to a list of candidates as preview items for the container or folder. The items are then evaluated, and a desired number are chosen for display based upon a sort criteria. Prior to being displayed, the graphical preview for each item is sized and is located on the background image. The above method results in a container having graphical or pictorial indicia of the container contents on the outside thereof. These indicia allow a computer user to more readily determine the contents of the container or folder without having to open the container or folder.

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